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# LOUISIANA Conservationist

April
1957

# *Louisiana* CONSERVATIONIST

EARL K. LONG
*Governor of Louisiana*

F. L. CLEMENT
*Director*

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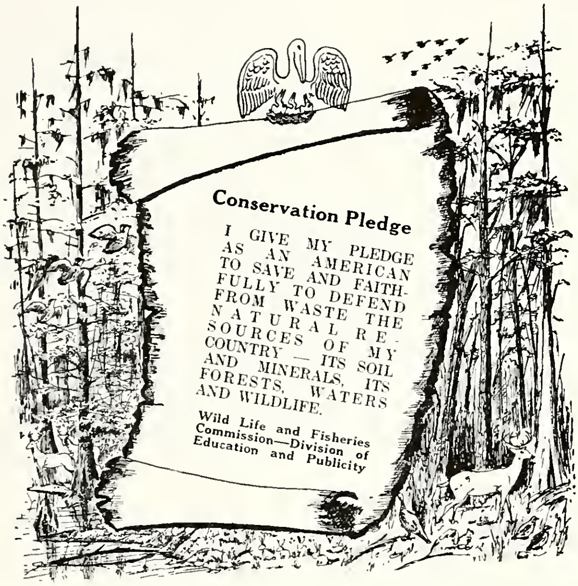

**Conservation Pledge**

I GIVE MY PLEDGE AS AN AMERICAN TO SAVE AND FAITHFULLY TO DEFEND FROM WASTE THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF MY COUNTRY — ITS SOIL AND MINERALS, ITS FORESTS, WATERS AND WILDLIFE.

**Wild Life and Fisheries Commission—Division of Education and Publicity**

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VOL. 9, No. 5

# EDITORIAL

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**COVER**

The Dragon Fly or Mosquito Hawk is a welcome sight in the swamplands of Louisiana.

*(photo by Britt)*

*By* F. Lamar Clement

*Director*

*Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission*

IN THE WORDS of the veteran outdoorsman, "If you go hunting with your boy, it's a pretty safe bet that you'll never have to go hunting for him." This advice is worth the serious consideration of every father, guardian or friend of an American boy.

All healthy boys have a certain amount of surplus energy which, apparently, must be worked off and sometimes this youthful exuberance carries them into dim and dangerous places strewn with vicious habits. But it is indeed rare to hear of a boy who loves to hunt or fish becoming a juvenile delinquent. Real sportsmanship, fair play and a sense of responsibility, all part and parcel of sports afield, cannot walk hand in hand with juvenile delinquency. They speak a different language.

Fishing and hunting are the oldest of all sports. Long before either of these two became a sport man was forced to hunt and fish for his very existence and down through the centuries these sports have had a strong appeal to men, women, and especially to youngsters, rich and poor alike. Every section of the country even though comparatively new, is steeped in the traditions of angling and hunting and despite the fact that game populaions are no longer as plentiful as in former years, the thrill of the hunt grows stronger for the sportsman must exercise a greater amount of skill than ever before if he is to reap a sporting share of the annual wildlife harvest, consequently one has only to expose the average boy or girl to the multidudinous charms of the outdoors and the many attractions of fishing in our lakes, streams, and bayous to imbue them with the desire to become real sportsmen.

**F. LAMAR CLEMENT**

If you teach your boy that the greatest fun is to be found in the finding of fish and in matching wits with these gamesters and not in the taking, although the latter in fair measure is the final desire, you will be pointing out to him the teachings of our Saviour Himself, who admonished the fishermen to keep only the large ones.

Show your boy how the hand of nature weaves her many wonders, small things entirely overlooked by the casual observer. Answer his countless questions as best you can then you may rest assured that his quick young eyes and grasping mind will bring simple queries, which, indeed, will tax your own knowledge of the lore of field and stream.

Encourage him to ask questions for from them you will learn many things yourself and by his very inquisitiveness he will indicate his intense interest.

When you take a boy fishing or hunting you may pay him the greatest compliment. You are treating him as an equal and no boy can fail to appreciate such a tribute. He knows that the possession of a gun or of a fine casting rod or a flyrod carries with it real responsibility and he is anxious to learn to use each of them safely and properly. He is proud of the fact that you expect him to act like a man and he revels in your confidence.

Sports afield or afloat will not only give your boy a sense of responsibility but will teach him fair play in his relations with all mankind and wildlife alike; create a respect for the property rights of others and bring to him a realization of the necessities of conserving our natural resources and set his feet in the path of clean living and clear thinking.

Don't make his day's fishing trip too long and do not allow him to become too tired. Make every trip a real adventure and end it just when he wants a little more. If you have fair luck, well and good, but be certain that he realizes that good sport is to be truly appreciated and that whether the fish box is empty or full there is a lot of fun in just fishing.

# WILDLIFE CHAMPS

## By Ednard Waldo

Chimney Swift

Whitetail Deer.

Arctic Tern.

Pintail Duck.

Flea.

Sailfish.

LAFONTAINE and Aesop, those two famous fable writers of the prowess and intelligence of the beast and birds of the forest, will have to take a back seat to comedian Bob Hope's story of the pigeon and the crow.

It seems, says Hope, that this pigeon and crow were sitting in a dead tree when a jet plane zoomed by. "I could fly that fast," said the crow. "Well, I couldn't," said the pigeon. "Oh yes you could," said the crow, "if your tail feathers were on fire like his."

All of which brings us to which bird can fly the fastest? It seems this honor goes to the appropriately named Swift or Chimney Swift which has been clocked at 200 miles per hour. This dull brown bird, with narrow pointed wings, looks very much like a flying cigar and is a visitor to Louisiana from March to late October. Its very rapid and irregular flight, general appearance, and movements distinguish it easily from the swallow which it otherwise closely resembles.

Most birds fly well under the 60-mile limit, but the Swift has another ability in the field of aerodynamics which has only recently been achieved by man; it has the ability to fly straight up or straight down, or else it could not enter the chimneys where it prefers to roost and nest.

The food of this bird consists entirely of insects, most of them caught on the wing. They include flies, beetles, such as the bark beetle, and many other injurious insects. Before the coming of the white man to America, the chimney swift built its nests in hollow trees. But with the advent of civilization the chimney was made to order for the Swift and he has adopted this way of roosting and nesting and hardly ever resorts to any other method when there's a chimney in the neighborhood.

Duck speeds usually range from 40 to 70 miles per hour and geese up to 60 and the loon around 50.

Mourning doves hit a pretty fast clip at 55. Starlings reach 45; pigeons, 35; and most cardinals, meadowlarks, woodpeckers and flickers about 25 miles. The English sparrow is rather slow and flies at 20.

Crows speed along between 30 and 35 miles per hour, but when annoyed can go up to 45.

Fastest of the insects is said to be the dragonfly at 55 mph, followed by the bumblebee at 35 and the horsefly at 25 mph. The elusive housefly is far behind achieving the speed of a mere five miles per hour. The wasp hits 12 mph and the hornet a little over 13. The grasshopper does a neat 15 mph.

Land animals not endowed with wings do a pretty good job of broad jumping which is their method of air travel. Taking into consideration their size, as for instance, our white tailed deer which achieves a distance of 40 feet, the puma jumps 38 feet and strange to say that much-vaunted jumper, the kangaroo, comes third with 32 feet. As for man's prowess, Jesse Owens, in the 1936 Olympics, broad jumped 26 feet, 5 5-16 inches which brought him just short of the record of a horse with 27 feet and ahead of the jack rabbit which achieves a broad jump of a little more than 23 feet. In the high jump, man's only other way of getting off the ground, without mechanical or other means, he doesn't do too bad a job. Walter Davis high jumped 6 feet, 8.32 inches in 1952 for a record, trailing the jack rabbit who hits 7 feet. Highest of the jumpers are the puma and the kangaroo with 9 feet, the horse with 8.5, and the white tailed deer with 8 feet. In the jumping class the insects are considered to be the best jumpers in comparison with animals and in proportion to their size. The flea can high jump 8 inches and broad jump about 13. To equal this, it is often said, man in proportion to his size, should be able to jump over a 30-story building or broad jump the length of two city blocks. However in reversing the situation we discover the paradox. Could the flea jump the same distance or height were he as large as a man? The answer is No, and the reason is this: When an animal's body increases in size it increases in weight much faster than its surface increases. Thus the flea's ability to jump as he grew to the size and weight of man would decrease as he assumed man's proportions and in the end he probably wouldn't do much better than man in the high or broad jump.

Of course there's a lot more to the aforementioned formula that's involved in skelital structure, basal metabolism and muscle density.

All of this goes back to "wishful" comparisons which look good but often prove the old maxim "No matter how good you are just stick around long enough and someone will come along who's better." As for instance the sulphur butterfly and the grasshopper have been famed for their long flights. The former have been known to migrate a thousand miles and the latter have been seen far out over the ocean. Yet many Arctic terns migrate from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back in 20 weeks flying time covering a total distance of about 22,000 miles. There's probably nothing on earth that can top his record for stamina, endurance and performance.

As far as speed goes fish appear to travel a lot faster than they really do. Fastest of all is the sailfish. He is the member of the swordfish family who has been consistently clocked by the "fish-o-meter," a device for measuring the speed of fish, at almost 70 miles an hour and a speed of over 60 is normal, for the usual striking sailfish. The tuna is next with a maximum speed of 44 mph on the meter.

Perhaps the most spectacular example of fish speed and sheer power is told by Harry D. Sleight in his whale fishery on Long Island. "In 1843 Captain Woods returned from a trip to the northwest coast in the ship Marcus of Fairhaven, of which he was master and Lemuel Tripp, agent. The voyage had been a successful one and the hold was well filled with casks of oil. In unloading the cargo, difficulty was met in removing one cask. An investigation was made and it was found that the sword of a swordfish had been thrust through the 1-8-inch copper sheathing, the planking, a timber, and still another thickness of wood, the skin of the vessel 19 inches of oak, and through the head of the cask 1 1-4 inches thick. The sword was preserved as positive proof of the story." From this record, Harlan Major, the internationally known fisherman and sports writer, draws the following conclusion. The total penetration was 20 1-4 inches of Oak. Neglecting the time factor or rate of work, we find the required energy to penetrate the material as 54,600 boat-pounds. A 500-pound swordfish, traveling at 83.7 feet per second or 57 miles per hour, approximates this energy.

The wahoo has been timed at 37 mph and a tarpon on the hook or a mako shark will do a good 35; the dogfish hits a fast 30 in a spurt.

For the anglers of the smaller species the following records have been assembled: The trout and the salmon hit a speed of about 23 mph and some claim they go even faster; the pike has been clocked at 20 mph; bass at 12 and a minnow can speed at more than 9 mph; perch travel at a top speed of 10.2 mph; mullet 8 mph; carp and eel about 7.5 mph; the bream who seems to dart along at a tremendous speed actually has been clocked at a top speed of 1 1-4 mph.

In the swimming category man can't even beat a minnow with his world record speed of 4.01 mph. However, he has the animal kingdom topped in one category—he can live as long or longer than most of them. There aren't very many wild birds or animals that are long lived. The Galapagos tortoise is said to head the list. Naturalist William Beebe estimates some of these ancient animals he found on the islands off the coast of Ecuador as being from 300 to 400 years and even older. Other species known to have reached the ripe old age of more than 100 years are the vulture, eagle, crow, parrot, raven, shark and eider duck. Bears have been known to reach the age of 40, deer 20, antelope 15 and fox 14.

For speed in the 100-yard dash no animal can beat the Cheetah, the Asiatic and African cat who is about the size of a leopard and has been clocked at 70 mph. The Cheetah is used by native sportsmen for hunting and easily runs down the Gazelle and other speedy animals.

Next is the pronghorned antelope which when checked both by automobile and plane clocked 60 miles and a young buck deer has been known to do 49 mph. Again we return to Mr. Jackrabbit who does 45 and coming in fifth in the animal derby is the racehorse who did 42.3 mph.

The famed greyhound, timed by watch, is little more than half as fast as the Cheetah and does 36 mph. Charles I. Gorman on ice skates doing the 440 and was timed by watch at 26.3 mph which means that at that speed he could only beat the charging elephant by a small margin who has a speed of 24.5 when infuriated. A real fast man on the track running the 100 meters has done 20.7 mph.

A real speed demon of the feathered class on land is the zaney Road Runner, that famed enemy of snakes, who has been timed by automobile at 20 mph. The barnyard chicken when alarmed will do 9 mph.

While snakes are not the slowest of creatures they pass but few of their fellow vertebrate travelers on earth. Fastest of these is the "Sidewinder" rattlesnake 2.04 mph; the Patchednose snake does 1.43 mph; the Gopher snake 1.18 mph; and the Coral King snake 0.72 mph; all were clocked at top speed.

# Old Baldy

### By Ednard Waldo

TOTALLY disregarding the technological advances that have reduced his once vast swamp domain to almost postage stamp size "Old Baldy," the North American eagle, has returned with his mate to nest in his ancestral aerie near a Houma oil rig.

For several months the "Baldys" have been the center of attraction for air observation crews of oil exploration companies in the area because of the fact that there aren't too many representatives of our National emblem around Louisiana nowadays.

There had been much talk among the fliers and geologists who have been swooping down in passing the nest to see how the pair were getting along as to whether the sitting mother would produce eaglets — that was if the pair really were the real McCoy National Emblem birds.

Finally Relmon E. Cotten, flying geologist of the Superior Oil Company, a bird fancier himself, who had been keeping close watch on the birds since their arrival at the old nest, requested that the Wild Life and Fisheries commission take a look.

When the commission plane arrived at the John Mecum Oil Rig No. 12 which is adjacent to the Eagle's nest, Cotten fairly burst with a true bird watcher's pride. In the nest in the place of the eggs he had been observing were three newly hatched eaglets and at the edge standing guard over them was the male eagle defying all comers. The female, which had undoubtedly gone off to forage, was nowhere to be seen. On the fifth swoop of the plane the father eagle probably decided the children had seen enough of those other "crazy birds," so he sat down on the nest and covered the eaglets with his wings thus ringing down the curtain on the show.

The nest, which is built in the top of a now dead cypress tree, is constructed of stout branches and is about six feet in diameter and would probably support the weight of a man. The eagles have apparently become accustomed to the goings and comings of the planes and pay little attention to them.

Even though drainage and cultivation have reduced the swamp to a patch of trees which is flanked by the oil rig activities old timers in the neighborhood say that the eagles and their descendants will return to the top of the ancient tree so long as it is permitted to remain. A trapper in the neighborhood reports that in the days of his grandfather who trapped the swamp the giant tree with the eagle's aerie was used as a landmark.

As a rule, eagles do not nest so close to civilization, however, they are possessed of a strong homing instinct that makes them return to nest in the place of their birth from generation to generation until the nest is destroyed either by man or the elements.

The eagle's chief and preferred food, whenever obtainable, is fishes of all kinds, but it takes any kind that it is able to obtain. Frequently it robs the American Osprey of his finny prey, attacking the bird in the air, and finally causing him to drop the fish, which it often catches before it reaches the water. Sometimes, however, the eagle fishes for itself. From its perch on the summit of a dead tree it launches downward, and, falling like a stone, it seizes its prey. At other times it hunts on the wing, pausing over the water by rapid wing-beats and finally diving, even from a great height, sometimes so swiftly that it is practically submerged when it strikes. Then again it varies this by flying leisurely along near the surface of the water. Audubon mentions that he saw it on several occasions, wading in the shallow water and striking at the small fish with its bill, and other observers have also noted a similar habit. It has been seen scrambling over the ice of a pond trying to reach a fish below, and it has even been reported to have caught flying fish in the air, which is a remarkable performance. Its other food consists of various kinds of waterfowl, particularly those that have been injured or are ill. In catching wounded birds two eagles sometimes work together. Other items of food are various kinds of mammals, such as rabbits, rats, and mice, also turtles and various kinds of birds, and occasionally it has been known to carry off a young lamb. It also preys to some extent on fawns, although it does not usually attack a full grown deer. Stories are frequently heard of the carrying off of small children, but these are practically all imagination. On occasion the Bald Eagle does not disdain carrion, and this is particularly the case in the west, where frequently cattle and similar domestic animals fall victims to drought or other catastrophe. Sometimes it drives away the gathered vultures and takes from them their repast, and keeps them at a respectful distance until its own hunger is satisfied.

"Old Baldy" the papa eagle stands defiant guard over his offspring when commission's plane swoops down to photograph them. The mother who recently hatched the eaglets had gone to forage for food.

After the plane had made five passes over the nest "Old Baldy", who was watching the eaglets while his mate had gone off to forage, decided his offspring had enough of "those crazy birds" and covered them up with his wings.

Residents of Mandeville tell of a pair of eagles that nested near there who were in the habit of waiting for hunters to flush poule d'eau only to swoop down on the hapless birds in flight.

"Old Baldy" and his mate are full grown American Bald Eagles. The male has attained all of his mature plumage which takes from three to five years in developing. At maturity the male develops the fully feathered silver white head which earns it the name "bald" and its white tail feathers are full grown.

Cotten, who has observed the birds in their forages says the male has a wing spread of from six to seven feet which is normal for the mature of this species.

In its distribution the American eagle ranges all over North America and usually nests in inaccessible places. This fact has made the eagle's lonely aerie a subject for many poems. In Louisiana the American Eagle is not seen too often and in fact even though his image adorns practically everything American from our currency to our public buildings there are comparatively few of our 170 million American citizens who have ever seen a live one.

# Louisiana Sportsmen Head Ducks Unlimited

A. C. Glassell, of Shreveport, has been re-elected Vice President of Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for the Gulf region according to an announcement made by the association following the 20th Annual Board of Trustees meeting held early this month at Cleveland, Ohio. Wyn W. Hawkins, of Lafayette, was re-elected to the Board of Trustees.

For the second year the board has appropriated $525,000 for the restoration and building of duck breeding areas in Canada, where more than 65 percent of this continent's wildfowl are born each year, according to H. Bliss Rucker, San Francisco, president. So far, in the past 20 years the organization has appropriated $5,000,000 for this purpose. More than 2,000,000 duck stamps are sold through the sponsorship of the duckhunter-sportsman's group.

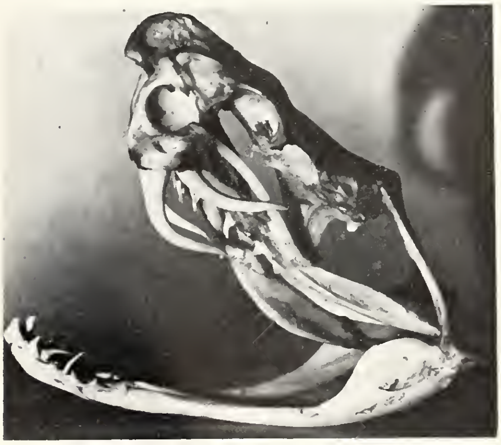
# Rattlesnakes in New Orleans

### By Percy Viosca, Jr.

The poisonous Canebrake rattler was once in abundance in the Gentilly section of Orleans Parish.

MY FIRST KNOWLEDGE of rattlesnakes in the New Orleans area dates back to my college days, about 1910, when we pedaled our bicycles along the old Gentilly dirt road, sometimes as far east of the city of Fort MaComb on Chef Mentuer Pass. Inside the entrance to the fort was a mouldering tomb with a fallen granite slab. One day, while we were nosing around the fort, one of my brothers, the late Felix Viosca, took it upon himself to lift the heavy slab. Coiled beneath it was a huge rattler. Slowly he eased the stone back into place, and when I reached him, all color had vanished from his usual ruddy complexion.

We pried up the stone a second time with the aid of a piece of timber, but the snake had disappeared between the loose bricks of the crumbling masonry. The old fort had been reported to be a den of rattlesnakes, but this was the closest we came to getting one of them, or it could have been vice versa.



Above is shown the skull of a Canebrake rattler

Since that memorable event, I have seen, recorded, and preserved, a number of rattlers from that portion of Orleans Parish which lies northeast of New Orleans proper. The earlier records were of captures made on the paired Gentilly alluvial ridges which flank Bayou Sauvage, a relic distributary of the Mississippi river on either side. Although lying within the corporation limits of the city the outlying extensions of these strips of alluvial land with a maximum height of about three feet above sea level were sparsely settled and in a very primitive condition until about two decades ago.

Two brothers, John and George Stiller, who maintained small farms near the Michoud Railway station, collected snakes for the Southern Biological Supply company. It was their practice to clear small hardwood tracts from time to time, in order to utilize the rich virgin soil as well as to secure firewood for their own use and for sale. No fertilizer was used, but whenever the soil became impoverished, they cleared a new tract and abandoned the old. The old tracts grew up in shrubbery and eventually into new stands of hardwood timber.

The undergrowth on these alluvial ridges consisted of dense thickets of switch cane, (*Arundinaria tecta,*) and dwarf palmetto, (*Sabal glabra,*) which harbored a dense population of rabbits, rats and other mammals. Bird life was abundant. Poisonous snakes normally occurred in the following order of abundance: ground rattler, canebrake rattler, and copperhead. In times of high water, numerous water moccasins invaded the area from adjacent swamps and marshes. It was while clearing the land that the Stillers located most of the rattlesnakes.

More than four decades ago, the swamps and marshes lying between the Gentilly ridges and the Lake Pontchartrain shore ridge to the north were reclaimed and planted in citrus groves. This venture was a failure, and for many years thereafter, the greater part of the tract grew up in weeds, shrubbery and blackberry brambles. Rabbits and rats thrived because of abundant food and the many hiding places afforded by the vegetation, cypress stumps, and the porous, shrinking muck. Rattlers soon invaded the area from the ridges to the south and thrived because of the abundance of small mammals and the ample protection afforded by the man-made habitat.

During the period that followed and to this day, this blackish muck has been mined for garden use and sold under the trade name, "black dirt." Today modern machinery is used for mining the muck, but in the early days, it was dug with hand shovels and loaded into wagons and trucks. The diggers were ordered to wear boots or leggings to protect themselves from the rattlers and other supposedly poisonous snakes which were frequently dug up with the muck.

In recent years, the artificial rattlesnake habitat has been encroached upon by dairy farms and beef cattle ranches, and finally by suburban development. There were frequent reports of large rattlers being killed in the area, and a number of specimens have come into my hands. Blackberry pickers and hunters have been treated for bites, one case as close as a half mile east of my home. Mr. Andre Trawick, superintendent of the tract, reported two cows as being killed by rattlers, and a local veterinarian has treated cattle for ulcers believed to be caused by rattlesnake bite.

High water driven over protection levees by the hurricane of September 19, 1947, flooded much of the reclaimed area and drove many of the rattlesnakes to higher ground. On October 7, 1947, Mr. Andrew Jaeger of Edgelake, noticed his flock of bantam chickens suddenly give a frightened cry and flush like a covey of quail from a spot near his barn. The following day, October 8, he was alarmed by the rattling of a large rattlesnake at the same spot. The snake started to crawl away, however, without attempting to strike. To use Jaeger's words, "he grabbed a stick and bashed in the rattler's head." This snake was turned over to me while there was life in the body, and I preserved it in formaldehyde. It weighed 5 pounds, 12 ounces; and measured 5 feet, 7 inches in length, and 8 1-2 inches in greatest girth. It had 5 rattles at the time of capture.

The next day, October 9, Mr. Dan Detweiller, a dairyman, whose farm is about a half mile west of the Jaeger property, killed a rattler which weighed 5 pounds 2 ounces; and measure 5 feet, 2 1-4 inches in length, and 7 1-2 inches in greatest girth. This snake had three rattles.

A few days later, October 16, Mr. Louis Jeanfreau, who runs a fishermen's resort on the Gentilly Highway, reported to me that he had killed several rattlesnakes amongst the rubbish and drift deposited on the ridges and levees west of Chef Menteur by the hurricane floods a month earlier.

On November 10, a second rattler was killed on the Detweiller dairy property. This one weighed 5 pounds, 12 ounces; and was 5 feet, 5 inches long, and 8 1-4 inches in greatest girth. This snake, also, had only three rattles.

On October 9, I had called upon Mr. Andre Trawick, superintendent of the tract, in the hope of getting additional specimens. Mr. Trawick claimed that through the years he and his ranch hands had killed a number of rattlesnakes on the ranch. Trawick claimed that the largest of these measured 6 feet, 10 1-2 inches, and had 14 rattles. This figure tops the largest canebrake rattler that I have measured by 8 1-2 inches, for my record was a mere 6 feet, 2 inches. However, I give the figures for what it is worth.

Trawick stated that on one occasion, he stepped on the body of a large rattler and it rolled under his weight, causing him to lose his balance and fall to the ground astride the snake. It crawled away in fear, making no attempt to strike.

Mr. Trawick's best rattlesnake story was the following: Lee Dace, a wood chopper, reported to him one afternoon that he had just killed "Old Grandpa", a large rattlesnake that used to sun himself on the top of a levee in an inaccessible spot across a canal in the rear of the tract. The Rev. Isaac Blunt, preacher, blacksmith and ranch hand, of dark complexion, likewise knew this particular snake and had seen him many times. Preacher Blunt asked woodchopper Dace what he had done with Old Grandpa's body as he would like to pay his last respects to the old gentleman. Dace replied that he started to bring in the snake, but it was so heavy that he stretched it across the shell road so that Trawick and Blunt could see it on their way out to make their rounds of the ranch.

Near the place indicated by Dace, Trawick and Blunt came upon the body of an enormous rattlesnake stretched across the shell road. The head was concealed under a blackberry bush. Blunt placed his tools beside the road and squatted alongside the snake. He picked up the tail with his left hand, and using his pipe stem in his right as a pointer, he carefully began to count the rattles. To use Blunt's language, while holding the tail, "it suddenly sounded off." Blunt remarked to Trawick, "look hea' boss, dis hea' snake ain't yet ded." With that the snake reeled around without attempting to strike. Preacher Blunt lost just a wee bit of his religion as he grumbled about "how young darkies would wound a snake and just get it all oiled up to bite er innercent person."

After mangling the snake with the tools at hand, Blunt and Trawick proceeded on their way. A few yards further on, they came upon "Old Grandpa's" dead body where Lee Dace had stretched it across the road. Blunt almost passed out, his face turning an ashy gray as he feebly gave vent to the following remark: "Cap you mean to tell me we's been messing around with a live rattlesnake!"

The following anecdote is also worthy of mention. This incident happened shortly after prohibition was repealed. A rich Chinese industrialist of this city had received an order for 10 gallons of rattlesnake brandy from a correspondent in Shanghai. The order specified that the snake had to be pickled in 190 proof alcohol while there was life in the body, as the spirit of the snake must merge with the spirits of wine. The finished concoction was to be shipped to Shanghai to be sold to ageing Chinese gentlemen as a rejuvenator. To the Chinese, the rattlesnake, like its native land, the U.S.A., signifies potency.

The order was turned over to me with the understanding that if I secured the snake, the Chinaman would secure the alcohol. I gave an order to the Stiller brothers on Gentilly road, and a few days later one of them brought me a fine fat rattler, nearly 6 feet long. I phoned the Chinaman, and he promised to bring me the alcohol the following morning. I expected him to get it at some nearby drug store.

Hours passed and no Chinaman. Finally at 4:30 in the afternoon, the old fellow, now tired and worn out, wandered into my office. He confessed that he had visited the establishments of his favorite bootleggers and was unable to secure the alcohol. In fact, he said that they seemed to have vanished mysteriously from their favorite haunts. I said, "Why man, haven't you heard yet that prohibition has been repealed?"

# Scouting

# And

# Wildlife

**By W. C. Goins**

The Scouting program this year offers interesting educational and informative subjects such as the restoration of our natural resources.

THE MONTH of April has been designated this year as the time for special training on fish and wildlife conservation by the Boy Scouts of America. Not only will all Boy Scouts be made aware of the importance of wildlife conservation but also many others with whom these members come in contact.

For a period of one month each year, the Boy Scout organization places particular emphasis on this subject in their training program throughout the nation. The organization has realized for a number of years, the importance of and the necessity for wildlife conservation. They are also aware of the important part all our natural resources play in our national economy.

This year, the organization has placed in the hands of all Scout Leaders, an educational kit designed to make the task of teaching the subject to its thousands of members, more simple. This kit was prepared with the assistance of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U. S. Dept. of the Interior, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Forest Service. Assisting with the financing were the North American Wildlife Foundation, the Wildlife Management Institute, and the Sport Fishing Institute.

While the conservation program as outlined for this year, which will be used during the month of April, actually acquaints the youths with the many phases of wildlife conservation, the main effort is aimed to show the interrelationship that exists among all our natural resources.

In our fishing waters may be found one of the best examples of interrelationship. Muddy waters are not conducive to fish-life and this condition may be brought about by mis-use of our woodlands as well as our farmlands, When timber is cut from our forests and the brush and grass allowed to burn, we have a rapid run-off of our rainfall. This rapid run-off carries into the stream large amounts of soils that muddy the waters and during spawning seasons, untold numbers of fish eggs are destroyed.

It would seem then, that it would be to the best interest of the fisherman if adequate cover was provided in the watershed area of a stream. By this means, the rapid run-off would be prevented and at the same time, the rainfall would be absorbed by the soil upon which it falls. It is quite likely that this would be in line with nature's plan in the beginning.

Another good example that might be used would be the interrelationship of our woodlands to our small game, both birdlife and quadrupeds. It is only in our forests that we find the squirrel, much of our fur bearing animal population, and many species of our game birds. There are two good reasons why these species may be found in the woodlands. First of all, they find cover in which to escape those birds or animals that prey upon them. The cover is also used for nests and dens in which the young are propagated. Secondly, all, or most of the food requirements for many species of our wild birds and animals are to be found in the woodlands. Accepting these facts then, it should not be difficult to realize just how closely interrelated are our forests and our bird and wild life species.

In the Scout training program this year will be several subjects, all designed to be informative, educational, and it may be said, very interesting. Among these subjects may be found instructions for setting up wildlife displays or exhibits, identification of animal signs, training on outdoor safety and good manners afield, better use of fish and game, the construction of bird sanctuaries, the principles of stream bank erosion control, the improvement of wildlife habitat, construction of wildlife homes for such species as wood ducks, squirrel, and small birds, fire prevention in the forests, and control of animal pests.

All in all, this Boy Scout training program on wildlife conservation tends to be one of the best that has ever been prepared. How much effort will be used to put this training program across to the scouts remains to be seen. It is quite possible that many of the scout leaders will be in great need of assistance. That assistance is available in most places but it will have to be offered.

These leaders have a number of places where they may obtain competent assistance. The county agent of each of our Louisiana parishes is well equipped on matters pertaining to our farm lands. The Forestry Commission would be the best source of information relative to handling problems concerning our woodlands. The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission is in position to assist with training that would pertain to the many phases of wildlife management.

To make the Boy Scout conservation training program the success for which it is intended, all these agencies will have to cooperate. In so doing, a program can be organized and put across that will, no doubt, reach more members of our American youth that can possibly be imagined.

The youths of today are the conservationists and conservation leaders of tomorrow. Surely then, if these youths have made available to them the basic precepts of wildlife conservation and are shown by practical demonstration the interrelationship of our wildlife species, they will come to realize the urgent need for an all-out effort on the part of each individual in this country to protect at all costs, our natural resources.

The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission lends a hand to the Scouting program during the Summer months.

Above, Agents Puerpera, (left) and Couvillon, (right) with a load of confiscated traps which were burned much to the satisfaction of the law and other fishermen.

# Trap Trappers

CATCHING fish with a trap is a cinch but it's no cinch to catch the trapper, so say Wild Life and Fisheries commission game agents Vincent Puerpera and Alfred Couvillon after laying in wait to catch two fish trappers for more than two months at Old River.

Acting upon numerous complaints of commercial fishermen in the area, the agents set out two months ago, first of all to find the hidden traps which are hard to find because the illegal operators don't stake out their traps, they merely mark their locations from landmarks, such as dead trees and stumps and keep the locations in their heads.

This meant a lot of wading and trial and error work for the agents in so large an area, nevertheless, the agents, after weeks of probing the waters finally located five of the catfish traps which had been placed upon the bottom. They carefully replaced the traps and waited patiently. After a week or so of patrolling the area, Couvillon equipped with a walkie-talkie in communication with Puerpera, in a car, finally spotted the illegal trappers and observed their operations. No arrests were made the first time nor the second. The agents were waiting for the trappers to establish the locations of their other traps. Finally after having cased the area thoroughly, the agents concealed themselves in waist deep water and weeds and waited for the final kill; and one early morning along came S. J. Evans and William Kayo, commercial fishermen of Innis. One by one, they lifted 11 traps and emptied them. When the last was raised, the agents moved in and made the arrest, and cleared the area of all of the traps.

The procedure sounds simple, however, it isn't. No fish trapper is stupid enough to mark his traps and traps don't talk so you have to catch the trappers in the act or else they'll swear the traps aren't theirs. This seems like a lot of work but other legal commercial fishermen don't look at it that way up in Old River where each trap has a capacity of 100 pounds of catfish.

Ordinarily fishermen take their catfish with trot-lines, with fishing poles, or hoop nets with 2-inch mesh with a 4-inch expansion which lets the smaller catfish through. With the fish trap all the fish, large and small, are caught and naturally this practice is frowned up by both the law and the legal commercial fishermen, who don't want good fishing waters depleted.

# The Town Ant.

### By Ednard Waldo

LIKE THE TROLLS of Teutonic mythology, the Town ants have come to wreak their mischief on man who has disturbed their subterranean domain and they are now threatening vegetation in 16 parishes in northwest and central Louisiana.

Some ten to 20 thousand years ago when the ice cap began to recede, the Town ant was an inhabitant of territory stretching from the tropics of Central and South America across the state of Texas as far as the western limits of the Mississippi valley. However, with the melting of the ice the sea level rose and the Town ant gradually retreated because the soil conditions became more and more unfavorable to its subterranean habitations. Finally after an eon of being pushed back by the forces of nature, the ant has found itself restricted to those parts of Louisiana and Texas which are still favorable to its form of economy.

The Town ant is a leaf cutting insect and is capable of, and is, destroying all manner of vegetation including crops, trees and even flower gardens. With its powerful mandibles the Town ant chops the leaves of plants, and trees, and uses them as a compost upon which to grow fungus gardens below ground to feed the vast colony nesting far beneath the surface. With the infestation of the Town ant, farmers have seen their crops and orchards disappear below ground, forests of small trees vanish and state foresters have found that the planting of pine seedlings is futile where it holds sway.

Biologists theorize that the Town ant concentration has a deep seated origin and began in this way: This ant, one of the wonders of the insect world, is a master engineer and builds cities which extend underground to a depth of 20 feet or more. In its subterranean caverns the ant plants its fungus food gardens and controls this fungus with a system of air conditioning and cultivation peculiar only to itself. And it is the air conditioning that is its undoing, for the ants must build in fairly dry, well-drained soil at an average sea level of 200 to 400 feet in Louisiana. In Texas, because of the difference in rainfall the ant is found at lower sea levels. Nevertheless its territory is restricted.

As man hewed down the forest and cleared the land, the Town ant forage area became more and more sparse and for a time he was content with his lot to live on the underbrush which sprang up after the clearings. However, as time went on, the Town ant has sought greener pastures and thus he is now moving in on areas where man is practicing forest conservation and agriculture. This is the secret of the Town ant invasion of 5,000,000 acres in the parishes of Grant, Calcasieu, Jefferson Davis, Beauregard, Allen, Vernon, Rapides, Sabine, Natchitoches, Winn, De Soto, Red River, Bienville, La Salle, Webster, and Jackson, — with the estimated cost of control at $5,000,000. To sum it up, the Town ant has been with us right along but now he is being forced through circumstances to concentrate and his depredations are becoming more and more evident in northwest and central Louisiana parishes.

The Town ant was first noted in Texas more than 100 years ago, and perhaps, because of its dimensions — the average being three-quarters of an inch long with the mlaes and queens coming in even more king-sized proportions — the ant was dubbed by a patriotic Texan as the Atta texana. Besides the male and the queen, the colony is made up of soldier ants who do no work and are there solely to defend the colony and the worker, non-fertile females, who vary in size from the tiny minims up to more than half an inch in length, and who do all the work, as the name implies.

One biologist predicts that studies of fossil ant nests over a thirty-year period will bear out his theories conclusively as to the original limits of the Town ants' habitation in North America. Town ants, he says, probably could live in many sections of the United States which are now favorable environments, due to topographic changes that have occurred since the ants' relegation to Louisiana and Texas. Such migrations are not likely since the Queen, who has a short flying range would be unable to migrate across unfavorable terrain to reach these areas. Infestations would most likely occur in other parts of the country through accidental importation by man as has been the case of the imported Fire ant which has infested 38 parishes in the state.

To a great many of us "an ant is just an ant" and consequently because of the fact that the Town ant and the imported Fire ant are causing great depredations in Louisiana the ants are being confused for one another. Although both insects live beneath the ground their economy differs. The Town ant does not as a rule forage for its food but rather grows its own in well cultivated subterranean gardens made from humus composed of the finely chopped leaf segments of the vegetation it attacks, and other debris. Upon this humus the ant grows a carefully cultivated minute species of fungus which is carefully controlled by the minims, smallest of the worker ants, who see to it that the fungus strain is kept pure and not polluted by foreign fungus. Most of the fungus grown by this leaf cutting ant is of the same plant specie as the mushrooms and toadstools, however, the fungus is kept in control in the underground caverns so that it never gets out of hand and grows out of proportion. Out of this fungus there grow clumps of clublike bodies called bromatia. The ants feed upon these and although specimens of this fungi have been transplanted to laboratories the bromatia will not appear without the presence of the ants, and even under carefully controlled laboratory conditions the entire transplantation can be kept alive only for a short time.

Much care is taken in the preparation of the Town ant's subterranean gardens. Temperature and humidity are of the utmost importance and the leaves are cut only at night on cloudy days during hot dry weather. When both the humidity and temperature factors are favorable, the ants transport the leaf segments to their garden caverns and both the minims and larger ants chew them up into compost. This compost is covered in a matter of hours with a white fungus. Ants control both the humidity and temperature by means of opening and closing the garden ventilating tunnels as the conditions change. Most remarkable of all is the fact that this is accomplished without the benefit of scientific instruments.

From this it may be seen the vast difference in the economy of the imported Fire ant and the Town ant. The former is not dependent upon its food supply from home-grown products dominated by sea level, and atmospheric changes and therefore has a wider range.

In the size of their habitations the two ants differ greatly. Whereas the imported Fire ant's nests usually average from two feet in height to three feet in diameter and three feet in depth the Town ant lives in huge colonies unrivaled in size by any specie on the North American continent. Town ants have been known to construct chambers 25 feet below the surface which covered an area of more than 40 feet. Into these eerie places, acres of seedling pines and whole orchards have been known to disappear. It is from these huge "towns" the ant, Atta texana, is said to have derived its popular name.

Unlike the imported Fire ant, the Town ant doesn't sting. However, its mandibles which are superior in size can draw blood. The Town ant is a vegetarian and not a meat eater and as has been said before grows its own food and does not forage for it as does the imported Fire ant who will eat practically anything of food value that comes its way. However, the Town ant will vary its diet occasionally and attack a granary and carry off enormus quantities of ground corn and chicken feed.

For thousands of years the ants of the leaf cutter family have baffled and fascinated the casual observer and scientist alike. For ages men have watched these insects carrying their peculiar burdens and speculated as to its purpose. In some places they are called "umbrella ants" for those observing the long lines of insects carrying the leaf segments thought perhaps this was a device used to protect them from the sun. Others thought the leaf segments which disappeared beneath the ground were used to line the ant's subterranean caverns. However, it wasn't until comparatively recently that scientists discovered the use to which this particular harvest was being put. However, no matter how fascinating it may be to observe these huge quantities of leaves disappear into the bowels of the earth, to the farmer, treegrower and gardener, the ant's activities are the harbinger of ruin and entomologists in the affected areas are going all out to control this pest. Farmers have been using tremendous quantities of carbon disuphide to destroy their nests and state and federal aid has been sought. Like the control program of the imported Fire ant which is being formulated in south and southwest Louisiana it will take the full cooperation of individual land owners and state and federal agencies to bring about control, entomologists and county agents say.

Town ant infestation after a heavy rainstorm. This shows how ants often build nests around trees and shrubs.

Cutaway by Highway department bulldozer shows cross section of town ant tunnels at Pollock, La. This infestation covered an area of 100 feet in diameter and tunnels went down 20 feet.

# The Love Life

**Photos and Text**

In the waning days of last February a regal Canadian gander peeled off from his flock of Canadian geese on their way back up North for the Summer months and lighted in a small private lake in Central Louisiana where rested a common Toulouse goose. Their meeting was the beginning of true love between common stock and that of royal background. Also their courtship and mating was contrary to the belief of biologists and naturalists who have studied the habits of the Canadian for many, many years. It is said that the Canadian gander mates for life and with a goose of the Canadian species. In the photos on these two pages we have recorded the time that the Canadian gander hit the water, won the love of the Toulouse and the nesting of the eggs. The place is Maryhill Seminary near Pineville, Louisiana. There are three goslins on the grounds of the Seminary today as a result of the Canadian's visit. Follow the order of the courtship in photos from

# of A Honker!

**Steve Harmon**

one through 11. (1) Just after the Canadian lighted on the waters of the lake. (2) The two geese swim to the other side of the lake near the Seminary clubhouse. (3) The gander struts before his beloved Toulouse. (4) Another phase of the courtship is the graceful point of the necks in unsion. (5) He hisses loudly, while the emotion which he experiences causes his quills to shake and his feathers to rustle. (6) They look back to the lake anticipating a journey to the other side. (7) The bold bird who has been caressing his mate takes notice of a foe in the presence of the photographer. (8) The Toulouse, also noticing a nearby enemy suggests that they return to the water, and (9) an excursion to a more private location. (10) The Toulouse prepares her nest on a small island of the little lake, and (11) prepares to guard the three eggs until the last hiss when the photographer returns for a last shot.

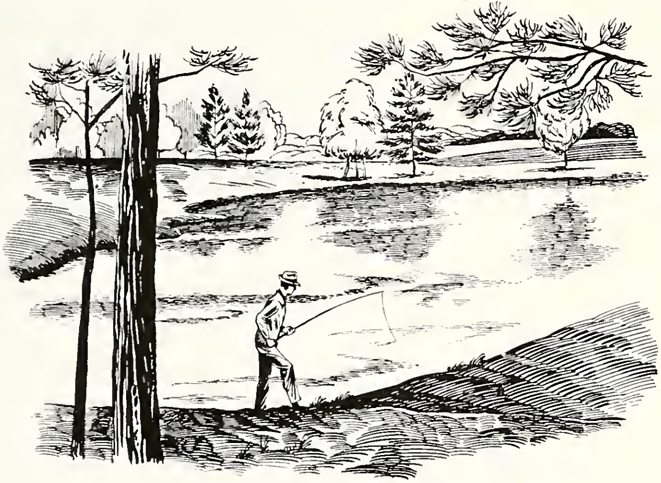
# Managing Farm Fishponds for Bass and Bluegills

**By Verne E. Davison, biologist, Soil Conservation Service**

FISHPONDS are accepted more and more as profitable and delightful features of farms and ranches. They make good use and safe use of the land—basic steps in the conservation of soil and water. Good fishponds expand the farm economy and furnish food to both rural and urban fisher-people—men, women, and children alike. They can also furnish water for livestock and for fire protection and provide swimming, boating and other recreation. For many pond owners, the sale of permits for fishing is a source of income.

Many farms and ranches have a suitable site for a good fishpond. Some have two or even several sites. All ponds will produce some fish. They will produce more if they are built right and managed right. They should be free of waterweeds and useless fish. And the watershed above the pond should be protected with soil conservation measures that control erosion and runoff.

A high-yielding fishpond is a combination of the water's natural productivity, added fertility when needed, and man's management. Your pond can be one that is easy to manage or one that cannot be managed well with any amount of effort. The difference is in the site you select and the way you build the pond and stock it. After that, good management is the key to successful production of bass and bluegills—and to satisfactory fishing — in your farm or ranch pond.



Fishponds make good use of land.

## SELECTING THE SITE

There are two important things to consider when you select a fishpond site:

A watershed of favorable size. A site for a good fishpond has a relatively small watershed from which little run-off water and silt will enter the pond. There must be a satisfactory supply of water—a small spring flow or enough silt-free runoff to fill the pond and replenish the water lost by seepage and evaporation. Be sure there is enough water to fill the pond in a year or less. On the other hand, if the flow is so large that it fills the pond in less than a month, you cannot fertilize it economically. Too much water washes the fertilized water out through the spillway.

A site where water can be impounded successfully. Sufficient depth for the pond, suitable soil, and a good site for the dam are necessary factors.

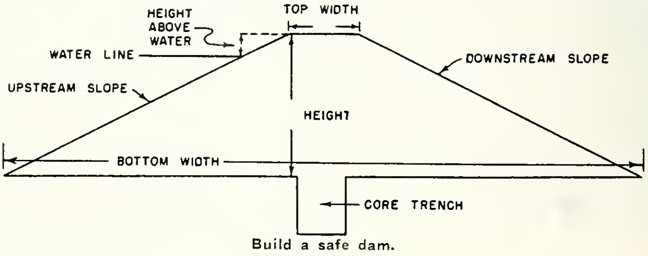
In the South, a depth of 4 feet is sufficient if the water level can be expected to remain constant, but 6 feet or more is usually better. In the Central States, a pond should be 8 to 10 feet deep. In the North, make it still deeper to protect the fish from freezing in winter.

Before you build a pond, make sure your soil will hold water against excessive seepage. The soil must be suitable for the pond botton as well as for the dam. Your local soil conservation district will help you check your watershed and select a suitable site.

## BUILDING THE POND

The best ponds require careful attention to the items that follow. Your local soil conservation district technician will help you with them.

A safe dam has a top width of at least 10 feet. This width makes the dam safe from muskrats which are likely to burrow into it. And it gives a good roadway for crossing. A safe dam must also have adequate bottom width, side



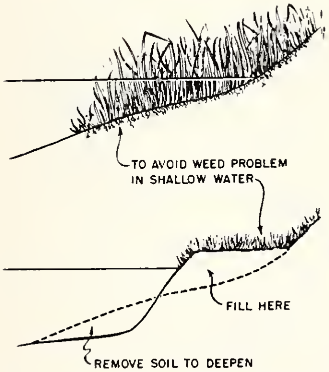
Build a safe dam.

slopes, and height above water. These depend on kind of soil, size of the watershed, and the width of the flood spillway.

Before you build a dam from the ground up, you must build a part of it from the ground level down. Below the surface, you may have gravel beds or layers of sand and sometimes old logs or other organic matter. These are porous and would allow water to seep rapidly beneath the dam. A core-trench is needed to cut off this seepage.

The trench should be the full length of the dam, and dug down to watertight soil. It may be 4 feet wide or as wide as the machine cuts. You can blow out the trench with dynamite if the site is too wet and soft for machinery. Then fill the trench with the same kind of soil you use in the dam. This way the core trench and dam become one solid fill.

Wide spillways are necessary for fishponds. When the flow of water through the spillway is more than 6 inches deep, many of your usable-size fish will escape. Even so, do not use a screen across the spillway. It will get clogged with fine trash, stop the flow, and endanger the dam. Of course, thousands of little fish will escape even in shallow flows through the spillway, but they will be replaced by thousands more.



**Deepen shallow edges to avoid water-weed problems.**

Shallow water at the edges is troublesome. It grows too many weeds, and it protects too many little fish from the bass. Very few pounds of fish are produced in shallow water.

You can get rid of shallow water by digging the edges deeper or by filling them in. Usually, a combination of these two methods is best. A minimum depth of 18 to 24 inches is good, but 3 feet is better.

You can manage your pond much more easily if you eliminate all shallow water. Getting rid of shallow places is worth more than it costs.

All trees and brush should be cut from the area to be covered with water. The stumps, too, must be removed from the dam site. If possible, also remove the stumps and snags from the pond bottom, especially where the depth is to be less than 5 feet. This leaves the bottom smooth for seineing, an important activity in management.

A strip 20 to 30 feet back from the pond edge should be cleared of all trees and brush. This reduces the fall of leaves into the pond, and enables you to have a grassy band around the pond from which to fish.

A drainpipe is required by law in many states as a public-health measure. In others, it is a matter of choice. A drainpipe does have value. If you have a heavy rain while the dam is being built, a drainpipe will protect it. Drainpipes are also useful for removing troublesome fish populations. It is often, however, more economical to kill all the fish without draining off the water, especially when water is not available for refilling quickly.

An overflow pipe or trickle tube controls the normal water level of the pond and allows the regular overflow to escape without drowning the grass in the flood spillway. It may be connected to the drainpipe or the trickle tube may be built separately.

Construction work should leave the pond attractive. Do not mar its beauty by excavating soil from above the waterline, except for the flood spillway or in a carefully selected "borrow pit".

## CONTROLLING EROSION

The life of your pond depends largely on whether the land above the pond is protected from soil erosion. The work and expense of building the pond, stocking it with fish, and managing it will be wasted unless the watershed is protected. Silt fills a pond. Muddy water reduces fish production. Floodwater replaces fertilized water and may carry your usable-size fish out through the spillway. All of these problems can be reduced or eliminated by soil and water conservation measures.

A good vegetative cover protects the soil and holds it in place. It also reduces runoff by allowing more of the rain to soak into the soil.

The soil conservationist in your district may suggest a diversion ditch and dike to carry floodwater and muddy water around your pond where erosion and runoff cannot be controlled. He can also show you how to bring more water into your pond if your natural watershed is too small.

Roads are serious sources of both muddy water and silt. Road water should be diverted wherever possible. Keeping farm roads on the contour and protecting the roadsides with a vegetative cover help to control erosion.

As soon as your dam is completed, you should get some kind of vegetation growing on it. Be sure to get a good grass sod established quickly in the spillway too. Usually, a straw or grass mulch will be needed on the side of the spillway that is cut into subsoil.

Whether or not to fence livestock away from your pond is a question you must decide. Grazing animals help control weeds and grass along the water's edge, thus saving handwork. On the other hand, fencing gives better sanitation and less muddying of the water. If livestock muddy the whole pond by wading, you must fence them out in order to fertilize successfully.

## STOCKING THE FISH

A fishpond must be stocked correctly and with the right kinds of fish if it is to provide good fishing quickly and continuously.

A combination of large-mouth bass and bluegills is dependable for warm-water ponds larger than 1/4 acre. If the surface temperature often reaches 85° F. or higher during the summer, you have a warm-water pond. Bluegills spawn frequently all summer in these warm waters. The bass feed largely on little fish, including their own young. Thus, they help prevent overpopulation in the pond. Large-mouth bass do not grow satisfactorily unless they have small fish such as bluegills, to feed upon.

Cold-water ponds are scarcely suitable for bass and bluegills. The bluegills spawn over too short a period to feed bass well. Rainbow or brook trout are usually grown in spring-fed ponds or other cold-water ponds. Trout do well in waters with temperatures up to 75° F.

Many pond owners want catfish, crappie, and other kinds of fish in their farm fishponds. These and most of the other desirable American species have been tried in various combinations at the Alabama Agricultural Research Station. These experiments showed that the bass-bluegill combination produces the best fishing and the most pounds of fish per acre with the least trouble. Other species were seldom successful.

Crappie and catfish can be stocked with the bass and blue gills in large "irrigation reservoirs," such as those in the rice area of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The fish population dimishes as the water is lowered in summer, but the fish grow rapidly again when the reservoir is refilled. You do not have this essential control of crappie and catfish in the usual fishpond.

Carp, catfish, or buffalo are stocked alone or together in some warm-water ponds with varying success. One method is to obtain usable-size fish from large seineing operations, haul them sometimes long distances, and dump them in the pond for immediate fishing at a small fee per day. A more productive method is to grow fingerling catfish, buffalo. or carp to market size

Bass and bluegills are best for warm-water ponds.

in ponds that are drained and restocked annually or more often. In ricegrowing areas, this method may be used in a rotation with rice.

Here are the essential things you need to know about stocking your pond with bass and bluegills:

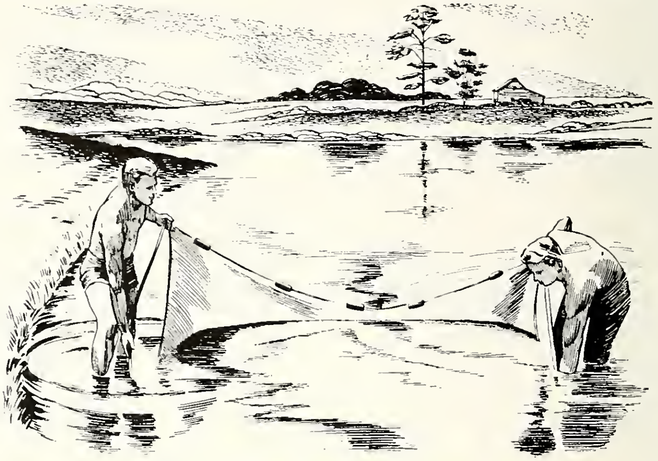
Stocking rates: If too many fish are stocked, there will not be enough food for each to reach usable size. The stocking rate, therefore, affects the size of fish and the success of fishing.

A good stocking rate for bass and bluegill ponds is 1,000 to 1,500 bluegills and 100 to 150 large-mouth bass per surface acre for well-fertilized ponds, or 500 bluegills and 50 bass for ponds of average fertility. Even this lower stocking rate is too high for ponds of less than average fertility. With these stocking rates, you should produce about 4 pounds of bluegills to each pound of bass. Bluegills should weigh from 3 to 6 ounces each and bass from 12 ounces to 1 pound when you begin fishing 12 to 18 months after stocking. These stocking rates are intended to give the usable-size fish 75 percent or more of the pond's fish food, thus preventing an overpopulation of smaller fish in the succeeding years.

Avoid or kill all native (wild) fish before stocking. Native or wild fish will populate your pond before hatchery fish arrive if you have a pair or two in the pond during the summer. And if you put in a few adult bluegills ahead of stocking, they will overpopulate the pond too. In other words, you cannot expect good fishing if you let nature stock your pond. A pond that becomes seriously over-stocked can be prepared for correct stocking by killing all the fish with rotenone. You will need 3 pounds of 5-percent rotenone for each acre-foot of water. Most State laws govern the use of fish poisons. Therefore, you may need a permit from your State Fisheries Division.

Be sure your stocking is successful before you begin fishing the pond. You cannot be certain that your stocking is successful until you have proof that all is well. Fish from the hatchery occasionally arrive at the pond in poor condition. This may be due to your failure to follow the instructions given by the hatchery or to some contamination in the vessel you take to meet the hatchery truck.

You may have a partial or complete die off as a result of poisoning by insecticides such as DDT, toxaphene, aldrin, or chlordane, used on nearby crops. Or losses may result from a low oxygen content of the water. If you see the fish in distress, you may save them by immediately applying 50 to 100 pounds of superphosphate per acre. The superphosphate enables the microscopic plants to begin growth and give off oxygen, thus aerating the water. Other accidents and disease occasionally upset the stocking of ponds. If you lose more than half of the pond's poundage, it is best to kill the remaining fish and restock.



Check your bass hatch with a minnow seine.

If you fail to catch small bass after this all-important spawning season, you have trouble. Your bass-bluegill weight ratio is not right, and you need a new stocking of bass. You may need to kill all the fish and begin again.

## USING FERTILIZER

High fertility of pond water accomplishes three desirable objectives: (1) Increases fish production and makes it possible to catch more fish; (2) makes possible one standard rate of stocking fish; and (3) prevents the growth of submerged waterweeds.

High fertility increases fish production. Fishing waters need enough nitrogen, phosphate, and potash to grow vast numbers of microscopic plants. The microscopic plants use the fertilizer from the water and grow and multiply. Fish do not eat the fertilizer, nor do they eat the tiny plants to any extent. But they do eat the insect larvae and other water animals that feed on these tiny plants.

It takes 4 to 5 pounds of insect larvae for each pound of bluegills; and in turn 4 to 5 pounds of little bluegills for each pound of bass. Thus the larger poundage of microscopic plants in fertilized waters provides for more insect larvae and more fish.

A well-fertilized pond supports 400 pounds or more of bluegills and bass per acre, and yields 150 to 200 pounds annually by fishing. An average pond of natural fertility supports about 150 pounds of bass and bluegills and yields only 15 to 35 pounds of fish per acre annually. Your pond is very exceptional if it needs no fertilizer added. Such ponds are usually near cattle barns where run-off water fertilizes them.

Uniform stocking rates are possible with pond fertilization. Since natural waters may feed as little as 25 pounds or as much as 600 pounds of fish, you do not know how many fish to stock in them. The usual rate of 500 bluegills and 50 bass is correct only for those ponds which support a moderate poundage of fish per acre. To assure good fishing, you need to control the amount of food and stock accordingly.

High fertility prevents the growth of submerged waterweeds. With plenty of fertilizer, millions of microscopic plants can be grown. These plants color the water enough to prevent sunlight from reaching the pond bottom. The submerged waterweeds cannot grow without this sunlight. Further, without weeds to harbor them, all mosquito larvae are eaten by the bluegills and bass. Thus, your comfort and the public's health are protected by adequate fertilization.

## WHEN TO FERTILIZE

The growing season of the microscopic algae is the best time to fertilize. This is from early spring well into the fall. You need to build up your pond's fertility quickly and as early as you can in the spring. Otherwise, you fail to benefit fully from the algae's growing season.

In Florida, you can fertilize the year round. In the southern sections of South Carolina, Georgia, and the Gulf States the growing season begins in early February and reaches their northern sections before the first of March. In North Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma you usually find spring weather warm enough for fertilization during March. Warm weather extends into November in the Gulf States and through most of September in the other States, even the northern ones.

Fertilize new ponds before the hatchery fish arrive. You will want to grow a lot of insect and animal food while the weather is warm. You also need to prevent the start of waterweeds. Thus, you should begin to fertilize as soon as your pond begins to fill—in spring, summer, or early fall.

Waterweeds that have already invaded your pond will use up the fertilizer you add. For this reason, kill them first.

## KIND OF FERTILIZER

A mineral fertilizer is best for your pond. Organic fertilizers, such as cottonseed meal, blood meal, manure, and leaves, encourage pond scum. A satisfactory analysis is 8 pounds of nitrogen, 8 pounds of phosphorus, and 2 pounds of potash per hundred pounds of fertilizer. This is known in the trade as 8-8-2. You may use a stronger fertilizer, such as 8-8-4, 10-10-5, or 12-12-4. Just be sure it has as much nitrogen as phosphorus. If you use a mixed fertilizer that has less nitrogen, add enough nitrogen to equal the phosphorus.

Fertilizer can be applied from a boat.

## HOW MUCH FERTILIZER

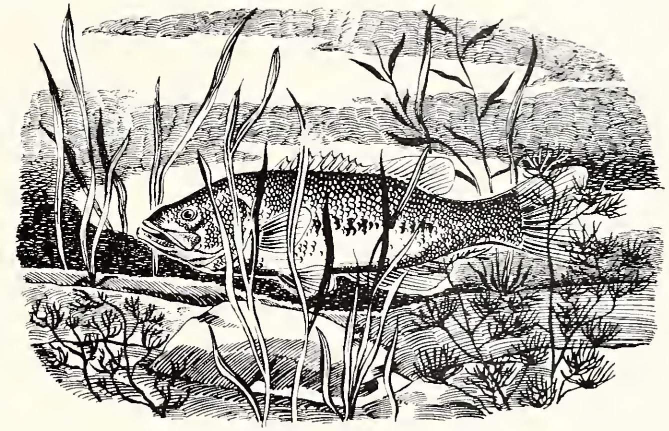
A few unusually fertile ponds stay the right color without adding any fertizer. But the average pond requires from 800 to 1,200 pounds of fertilizer per acre each year and the least fertile from 1,200 to 1,600 pounds. A pond that requires as little as 200 or 300 pounds is exceptional.

No one can predict exactly how much fertilizer a pond will require. Ponds need less in dry years and more when rains dilute the fertile waters. But you can fertilize correctly in any case by testing the water in your pond with a simple gadget you can make yourself.

Nail a white disk on the end of a stick. Mark the stick at 12 and 18 inches above the disk. Your pond is fertile enough when the disk goes out of sight about 12 inches below the surface. If you can see it at a depth of 18 inches or more, your pond will not feed 400 pounds of bass and bluegills per acre. You need to fertilize. The color of the water may be any shade of green or brown. That depends on the number and kinds of microscopic plants —green, yellow, red, or blue.

At each application, use at least 100 pounds of fertilizer per surface acre, but not more than 200 pounds. You will see benefits with your measuring disk within 3 to 7 days. In the spring you can expect to fertilize 3 to 6 times, at 10-day intervals or weekly.

When the color of the water satisfies the test, your pond is fertile enough. Watch it. When it begins to clear, test it with your white disk. Add fertilizer when it is needed to restore the correct coloration.



Shade out submerged waterweeds.

## HOW TO APPLY FERTILIZER

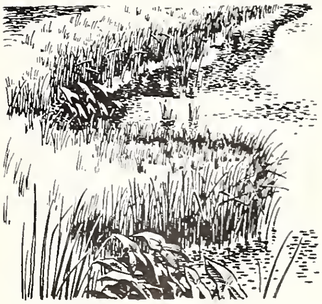
Fertilizer can either be poured from a boat or broadcast by hand from the bank of small ponds. You need not scatter the fertilizer over all the pond. In fact, it is better not to place it in water deeper than 5 feet. A single line up one side of the pond and down the other is sufficient. Wind action and undersurface currents will mix the fertilizer throughout the pond.

The Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station recommends an alternate method of applying fertilizer. First, build a platform and submerge it about 12 inches below the pond surface. Then place the sacks of fertilizer on the platform when needed, tearing off the tops of the bags. Wind-wave action will distribute the fertilizer. One platform is enough for each 8 to 10 acres of pond surface. Add fertilizer as often as the white disk shows your pond needs it. Do not expect all the fertilizer to disappear from the platform, as some insoluble material will remain at all times.

## WEEDS AND CONTROL

All waterweeds are undesirable in fishponds. They interfere with fishing and do not provide food for fish. They feed turtles, but not fish. Waterweeds foster the breeding of mosquitoes. They hide too many little bluegills from the bass, thus causing overpopulation of intermediate-size bluegills. Pond, weeds may give fish a strong "fishy" flavor. When pond weeds decompose during periods of low oxygen in the water they contribute to the death of fish. Waterweeds also use up the pond's fertility.

You can prevent most waterweeds from coming into your pond easier than you can get rid of them. Chemical poisons and manual removal are only temp-



Graze, mow, or spray edge weeds.

orary controls. The weeds will return unless you make conditions unfavorable for their growth. Therefore, never forget the importance of deep edges and highly fertile water. These measures used together are the chief and cheapest means of preventing most waterweeds.

All leafy water plants are weeds to the fishpond owner. Some grow submerged below the water surface; a few float; others are marsh plants that grow in shallow water only.

Submerged water weeds, such as naias, elodea, and potamogetons, grow chiefly below the water surface, but their flowers and a few leaves may grow above it. They can be prevented by fertilization. The vast quantity of microscopic algae in fertilized ponds clouds the water and shuts out the sunlight without which the waterweeds cannot start to grow.

If these waterweeds are already established, microscopic algae cannot be increased enough, even with fertilizer, to color the water and shade out the sunlight. The weeds take up the fertilizer, and the water remains clear. Kill the weeds. Then fertilize the water.

Erosion, silt, and muddiness also prevent the growth of submerged weeds, but this is a destructive, unprofitable way. Occasional "black waters" caused by organic stains also prevent these submerged weeds.

Sodium arsenite will kill submerged weeds and control them temporarily. It is a dangerous poison to humans and domestic animals, but can be applied safely. You will need the advice of your fish culturist, county agent, or Soil Conservation Service technician before you use this poison.

Submerged weeds can be killed also by winter fertilization (except where the pond is covered with ice). Pond owners, however, often despair before the kill is accomplished.

Pull cattails as they appear.

Begin the treatment in late winter (January in the South). Broadcast the 8-8-2 fertilizer (or equivalent) evenly over the weedbeds at the rate of 200 pounds per surface acre. Repeat every 2 weeks until a heavy growth of pond scum covers the submerged weeds. These weeds, totally shaded, die in early to mid-summer and the whole mass floats to the top, then sinks to the bottom, and is disintegrated quickly by bacteria. The process takes from 4 to 5 months before the weeds are killed and disappear.

Remember that only adequate fertilization will keep the submerged waterweeds from returning.

Marsh plants, such as parrotfeather, pennywort, rushes, cattails, and grasses grow at the pond edge or in shallow water. You should either get rid of them or confine them to a narrow band by deepening the edges of your pond 18 to 24 inches—3 feet is better.

Cattails are removed easiest and best by pulling them when new seedlings start. Even old beds can be more easily controlled by pulling than by using chemical sprays.

Grasses and other edge plants are controlled by grazing or mowing or by spraying with a mixture of 2,4-D and diesel oil. A mixture of 8 ounces (1 cup) of 40-percent 2,4-D (ester form) in 5 gallons of diesel oil is standard. You can kill back all the marsh and edge plants by spraying them once or twice each summer. A second application is usually needed to finish killing weeds, shrubs, and any heavy growth of plants.

Plants with leaves that float on the pond surface, such as pond lilies and watershield, can be avoided by fertilizing your pond to prevent the development of seedlings. This type has roots on the pond bottom.

You can kill the plants by repeated cutting of the leaves. This starves the roots. The leaves need to be cut only slightly below the surface of the water. Five or six cuttings may be required. Just keep at it until leaves appear no longer. For big jobs, you can use a gasoline-motored mowing machine on a boat.

2,4-D will kill a single crop of leaves. Successful spraying is difficult, however, since the spray washes off with wave action.

Unless you fertilize enough to shade out the light, these weeds will return; or even more troublesome weeds, such as coontail, may come in heavily. You should not, therefore, try to kill these weeds unless you can make the water highly fertile.

Floating plants, such as water hyacinths, tiny duck weeds, and water lettuce, float on the pond surface. Their roots feed from the water rather than from the soil.

Harvesting the crop is part of pond management.

To get rid of water hyacinths, spray them every 2 or 3 weeks in summer with 2,4-D until the last one is dead. You may need to spray 6 times. Use 1 quart of 40-percent 2,4-D (water soluble) in 100 gallons of water.

To control the tiny duck weeds, allow the wind to blow them freely to the edges of the pond. These plants cover a pond where: (1) Trees, brush, or high banks prevent wind from blowing across the surface; (2) submerged weeds grow to the surface and hold the little floating plants in place; or (3) floating logs and trash prevent wind action. Cut brush and trees from around the pond if they prevent wind action on the pond surface.

Filamentous algae (pond scum) are the stringy, hairlike plants that grow on the pond bottom and on logs and other decaying organic matter in your pond. They are of two main types—single filaments and branched filaments. Both interfere with fishing and encourage mosquito growth.

You can kill the single-filament types with copper sulfate and control them by keeping weeds, grass stems, hay, leaves, manure, and other organic matter out of the pond. Use 2 to 4 pounds of copper sulfate, or the equivalent liquid strength, for each acre-foot of water. These single-filament algae are the same algae you grow in your pond by winter fertilization to kill the submerged waterweeds.

Ways to prevent or control branched

filamentous algae are now under study.

In short, you can control weeds best by:

Eliminating shallow edges and marshy conditions.

Fertilizing enough to shade the pond bottom.

Assuring unhampered wind action on the surface.

Frequent mowing or moderate grazing around the pond.

Keeping organic matter out of the pond.

Using 2,4-D in diesel oil for edge spraying.

## FISHING THE POND

Fishing is one of the most important practices in pond management. Fishing success tells you whether you are managing your pond right. In the second year after stocking, your pond will contain its limit of fish, measured in pounds. No more weight can be grown unless you remove fish from the pond. Production will equal your harvest—take out 50 pounds of fish and 50 pounds will grow back.

You cannot have too many fish of usable size. You must, however, consider 2-ounce bluegills and 4-ounce bass as usable. You can maintain your fishing still better if you consider 1½-ounce bluegills as usable. You cannot expect all of your fishing to be rewarded with large bluegills and bass.

You never have too many fingerlings either. Fingerlings include bass up to about 4 inches in length and bluegills up to 2 inches—sizes which bass can gulp down readily. This fingerling group is the pond's supply of food for the bass. Rapid growth and heavy poundage of bass depend on a steady, heavy reproduction of little bluegills all summer. Fertilizing early in the spring, through the summer, and into fall assures the highest production of fingerling bluegills.

## CONTROL FISH SIZE

Bluegills from 2-inch fingerlings up to fish 1½ ounces in weight are of intermediate size. This size group is scarcely useful to bass or fishermen. A pond that provides good fishing has 70 percent or more of its total poundage in usable-size fish. When the total weight of intermediate-size fish is more than 25 percent of your pond's total poundage, your fishing will usually be poor.

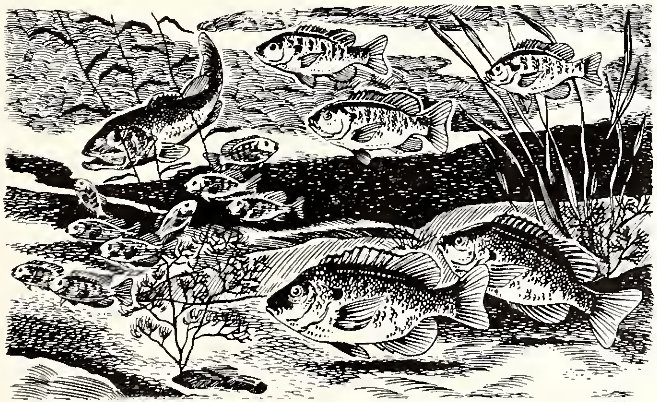
If you have large bass but cannot catch them, you have too many bluegills in the intermediate size and too few bass—less than 1 pound of bass for every 6 or 7 pounds of bluegills. To correct this, reduce the number of intermediate-size bluegills and get a restocking of bass.

You can reduce the number of intermediate-size bluegills by passing a 50 or 60 foot seine of half-inch mesh through the shallow parts of your pond. Throw back all the bluegills that are big enough for fishing. Destroy all the ½ to 2-ounce bluegills. Don't remove any bass you catch in the seine because you will need them to help control the bluegills. You should seine your pond every week or 10 days until you see that most of the intermediate-size bluegills have grown into useful size.

Occasionally, you may have too many bass of 4- to 8-inch length. These intermediate-size bass can be thinned out easily by fishing, since there are never more than a few score per acre.

With experience, you can reduce your crowded bluegill population by applying rotenone at the edges of the pond in early fall. Apply the rotenone 3 or 4 times at intervals of 2 weeks, about noon on still days. Use 1 pound of 5-percent rotenone for each 300 linear feet of edge. Apply it in a line about 25 feet from shore. Do not use this rotenone treatment in ponds of less than 2 acres.

If neither seineing nor the use of rotenone at the pond edge is feasible, kill the whole population in late summer. Restock after 2 weeks with bluegills and get a new stocking of bass the next spring.


A pond has three sizes of fish—fingerlings, intermediates, and usables.

Herons, kingfishers, and other fish-eating birds eat mostly intermediate-size fish. Thus they help you have more usable-size fish. Turtles eat mostly weeds and dead fish; so turtles are only a nuisance to the fisherman, eating from his string of fish or from his bait.

Your pond is ready to fish when the bass have reproduced successfully. This occurs the first spring after the bass are stocked if they mature correctly. The way to be sure of this is to catch some of the 1- or 2-inch bass in a minnow seine. If you catch no fingerling bass in the seine, you do not have a successfully stocked pond, and your pond needs restocking immediately. Use the same number you would for a new pond.

Even bluegills should not be fished until the bass have spawned. By delaying the bluegill fishing you avoid having too many intermediate-size bluegills in succeeding years.

## HOW HARD TO FISH

It is often said, "You can't overfish a pond with hook-and-line fishing." This is true in one sense, but not quite in another. Frequent fishing is good for your fish population, since the remaining fish grow bigger. Fortunately, heavy fishing does not deplete your pond permanently. It does produce alternate periods of good fishing and poor—good for a week or two, then poorer fishing for a week or two. Extremely heavy fishing affects fishing even longer. To have the best fishing each time you go, moderate fishing is the way. If, on the other hand, you want the greatest total yield—200 to 250 pounds per acre—fish the pond as hard and as often as you can.

If you catch too many small bass, fish them harder and take out those you catch. The ones you don't catch will grow larger and will soon be usable size. Also stimulate the bluegills to spawn by fishing harder for adult bluegills and by increasing their food supply with more fertilizer.

The best bluegill fishing usually is at their spawning beds. Don't be reluctant to take the bluegills off the beds or you won't harvest your crop as you should.

To have the best bass fishing, you must fish both the bass and the usable-size bluegills. You get the most return when you harvest each year 3 to 4 pounds of bluegills to 1 pound of bass. However, most of your bass will be caught from fall to spring and bluegills from spring to fall.

After your new pond is ready to fish, you do not need to restrict your fishing as to seasons or sizes of fish. You should fish during the spawning seasons or any other time. When you catch a fish large enough to eat, its removal and use is good sense.

# Wildlife and the Land

IF HUNTING TODAY isn't like it used to be in grandpa's time, maybe there are good reasons. If a limit of four or five ducks a day seems picayunish alongside the fifteen and twenty bird allowance of but a few years back, maybe that is to be expected. And prairie—grandpa shot 'em by the wagonload at the turn of the century. Now they're about gone.

"There are a number of reasons for this," says Dr. J. P. Linduska, wildlife management authority. "Varying conditions present problems difficult to solve."

"For instance," said Dr. Linduska, "while production figures for some species of wildlife have been slipping off the bottom of the graph paper, corresponding statistics for *Homo sapiens* have been climbing straight up. In 1900 we were a population of 76 million well scattered souls with lots of elbow room. At the last national census in 1950 things were a little cozier. With a count of 154 million, there were two of us where we had been only one before. So, even with the same amount of game, it would divide up to only half as much. But it isn't even that good. We don't have as much game. And hunters have increased at a greater rate than the population as a whole. In just a 17-year period, from 1933 to 1950, our combined sales of hunting and fishing licenses nearly tripled — from 10 to 28 million. In only 14 years, from 1936 to 1950, the duck hunting fraternity increased four fold.

"And people continue to do very well, thank you. In our United States, it's a net increase of one every twelve seconds, 7,000 a day, 2½ million a year. By 1975 — maybe sooner — we will top 200 million. So the competition won't be getting any less.

"And what about game supplies?" continued the noted wildlife authority. "Well, guessing their population trend is considerably less certain than plotting human population curves. But there are ways of looking into the future for wildlife, too. One of the best of these is to examine the basic elements of game abundance.

"Wildlife, remember, is a product of the soil just like corn, wheat, dairy cows and beef. More than that, the more fertile the soil, the more of everything it will produce, including wildlife. The great bulk of our small game is produced and harvested on privately owned farms. So we can begin by looking at private land management for past answers and future trends in small game management. The record's not good but the future looks brighter.

"According to some statistics," Linduska continued, "our forebears started out in this country with 560 million acres of potential cropland. Surveys have disclosed that by 1934, 300 million acres — more than half — of this total had been subjected to erosion. Of our total tillable acreage, one-fifth, the experts say, has been ruined for productive agriculture.

"Prior to 1934," he said, "we were losing our agricultural land at the rate of of a million acres a year. The loss has since been reduced by half, thanks largely to an aggressive program of the Soil Conservation Service in the Department of Agriculture. But the present day equivalent of 2,500 200-acre farms being carried on the winds and floating down our rivers and streams is much too great for public peace of mind and sportsmen's comfort. There is much yet that remains to be done.

"Our record of land mismanagement in this country certainly isn't the *only* answer to the game conditions we find today as compared with the lush past. But it's one of the *main* answers to what's happened. And, also, happily, it can be an invaluable clue to what we should be doing for wildlife if we will but take heed of the record.

**We don't have as much game today because we don't have as much land on which wildlife can survive. There are more people today than there were in Grandpa's day.**

"If destruction of soil fertility and with it habitat for wildlife can cut the props from under game supplies, then shouldn't it follow that restoration of the good earth can shore up a tottering wildlife resource? It doesn't only logically follow; it's being done. And the opportunities are endless for benefiting wildlife in this revolution of land use.

"Today the American rural scene is undergoing a notable face lifting. Thousands of farms have been replanned in accordance with technical know-how to reduce erosion and restore fertility. Some of the innovations in farming will be detrimental to game, but many more will contribute directly to wildlife interests. The net effect should be decidedly in the sportsmen's favor. And we haven't yet begun to capitalize fully on all the possibilities.

"Modern day land planning recognizes multiple values even on private areas," said Dr. Linduska. "And while primary uses may emphasize cash farming, the encouragement of wildlife crops is an integral part of progressive land management. Most farms have problem areas either uneconomical to use or the intensive use of which would hazard erosion consequences. These spots, in particular, can be intensively managed for game.

"In addition to evaluating and demonstrating food and cover combinations for common upland species of farm game, attention will be given to adapting the farm environment to waterfowl production. Nearly 2 million ponds have been built on farms and ranches in the United States in the past 20 years. And several million more are in the offing. With proper know-how, this activity in itself could add greatly to waterfowl production in the States. And so this potential will be explored fully.

"Seldom spectacular, habitat management, nevertheless, is the demonstrated method for building bigger game crops economically. Swiftly changing concepts of land-use make a place for wildlife on the farm and offer new possibilities for doing something about it. The immediate need is for the development and promotion of effective means for accomplishing the most good. The Remington Farms program aims simply to contribute as best it can to those needs. Its findings will be made available to the interested public."

# *An Open Letter To Louisiana Fishermen!*

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA FISHING CLUB, INC.
LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

Mr. Steve Harmon, Editor
Louisiana Conservationist
126 Civil Courts Building
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Mr. Harmon:

In looking through the March, 1957 issue of the Louisiana Conservationist, I noted that Southwest Pass and Grand Isle were mentioned in your Hot Spots article as deep sea fishing areas deluxe.

Being familiar with both these areas, I do agree that the fishing is good; however, I feel that fishing off Cameron year round is as good as any place on the Louisiana coast.

We of the Southwest Louisiana Fishing Club are planning our 19th annual fishing rodeo July 5th, 6th, and 7th, and are looking forward to another record catch of Tarpon, Sailfish, King Mackerel, etc.

As our 1957 program has not been printed yet, I am enclosing a 1956 program which shows prize winners of the 1955 contest and you will note that all classes of fish were caught and fine prizes awarded to the winners.

I would appreciate your publishing this letter in the next issue of the Conservationist, including any comments you would like to make on our rodeo rules and award system. Also, this will serve as an invitation to the many Deep Sea fishermen in the state to participate in our rodeo beginning July 5, 1957.

Sincerely,

E. B. (Bill) Watson
President
Southwest Louisiana Fishing Club, Inc.

# Report of Turkey Hunt

Jack Wall of Springfield, La., seems well satisfied with his 18 pounder he bagged in St. Helena Parish.

ANOTHER TURKEY hunting season has been added to the memoirs of the Louisiana hunter. The season, which lasted only four days, April 5-8, has been termed successful for the most part. Many of the old-timers were on hand when the shooting got underway at the start of the season but there were quite a few comparatively new hunters joining the ranks, also.

This turkey hunt was, in effect, brought about by joint efforts of the sportsmen and the game administrators of the state. The hunters knew of the presence of the turkeys in the parishes that were opened to the hunting and the wildlife biologists concurred that these flocks could be shot for a short period of time without adversely affecting the turkey population. Actually though, the flocks were not shot as such as the spring shoot is at a time when the flocks are already broken up.

At the outset of the season, Kenneth Smith, District Supervisor, Baton Rouge, was assigned the task of covering the hunt to obtain certain pertinent facts. This information is very valuable and is also welcomed by the sportsmen and others who have been awaiting the results of the hunt. The report by Smith is as follows:

With the able assistance of his granddaughter, Sylvia Bush, W. B. Smith of Clio, La., proudly displays and 18 pound gobbler he took during the four-day turkey season.

At the March 26 meeting of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission, a four-day, gobbler only, season was granted for all or part of eight parishes in the state. This season was to run April 5 through 8, inclusive, with a season limit of one gobbler per hunter.

In order to obtain as much data as possible on hunter success, gunning pressure, and related information, a concerted effort was made by biologists and enforcement personnel to cover the parishes hunted and to talk to individual hunters. Biologists from adjoining districts assisted with hunter bag checks in Districts IV and VII. Accurate weights, ages (differentiating between immatures and matures), areas hunted, and length of time per hunter effort, were obtained where possible.

One aspect of the bag check attempt is particularly noteworthy. Though the coverage was not complete, the information obtained would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Enforcement personnel. Rangers of District IV and VII made every effort to funnel information to the writer and, through the radios of the mobiles units, called attention to several kills which would have otherwise gone unrecorded. Special thanks to Ranger Captain Leonard New of District VII.

In checking through the information forwarded by Dewey Wills, it is noted there were 31 gobblers reported taken in District IV; five from Franklin parish; 18 from Madison parish; and 8 from Tensas. Though it was possible to accurately weigh only a few birds, said weights seem to indicate these turkeys are two to three pounds heavier than birds of comparative age taken in the Florida parishes. Of the known weights obtained from St. Helena and Livingston parishes, mature gobblers average around 17-18 pounds and immatures around 12.

During the four-day season, the reported kill in District VII is as follows:

East Feliciana, 23; St. Helena, 21; St. Tammany, 7; and, in Livingston, 16. No gobblers are known to have been taken from Washington parish (this report was written ten days after the last day of the season).

Because of the nature of the roads in St. Helena, it was possible to obtain more bag checks in this parish than any of the other four hunted in District VII. It is believed

No doubt, these two turkey hunters will be among the first to enter the woods when the season opens next year. At the left is R. J. Arledge and on the right, J. C. Hughes, both of Livingston Parish.

more hunter efforts were made in northwest St. Helena than on any other open area of similar size. There was a decided concentration of hunters in this vicinity on opening day. Over 20 automobiles were counted on one two-mile stretch of woods road, and 99 hunter efforts were recorded on opening day in the area.

Eleven birds were checked out of 275 hunter efforts recorded, which indicates hunter success at about one turkey per 25 efforts. No comparable figures are available to indicate whether this is high or low.

As shown above, there was a total of 98 legal gobblers taken in seven parishes during the 1957 season. This figure includes the turkeys actually checked in the bag as well as those reported during and after the season. A list of names was kept to avoid repetition. It is very probable there were a few kills which have not been reported.

The kill during the '57 season was apparently higher than that of '56 when 65 gobblers were reported taken. One probable reason for this is the fact that the eastern portions of East Feliciana and Franklin parishes were opened this year in addition to the six opened last year.

Information obtained during the past hunt will be valuable in any future consideration of open turkey seasons in Louisiana and all personnel participating in the bag check effort are of the opinion it was time well spent.

# Short Cut to What?

### By Pierre la Pirogue

DE BIG NEWS on de bayou dis week was all about de New Orleens Ship Channel ever since Gabi was see dose hengineers fellows wit de spyglass on tree sticks slide true de marsh like dem sports whats hunt duck on de opening day only when hees on de way to town wit de load of fur hees trap dis winter. All de day dose mens and boys was talk 'bout not'ing else—even when de rain don' fall and dey can catch frog and pick it up moss. Dey's mighty happy, let me tell you, for dis short cut. An' much bet is being already made on how fas' dey's gone make it from Breton Sound to de city.

But de trapper him he's not so glad cause hees what you call apprehensife (how you like dat one word, hein?). He's remember not too long ago when de Intra Coast Canal she was dug an' what 'appen to de marsh right away. First thing de grass wit tree corner is die. Den little by little, but more and more, de rat is get more scarce. Before you can say Anatole Boudreaux no more rat is catch in de trap. How a man is gone feed his family wit no rat in de trap I ask you?

Let me tell you, t'ings got mighty hot an' pipe smoke is blow all over de store when de big discuss is take place de other night. Gabi him, was so excite he shake King Bee all around de floor when hees try roll one cigarette and maybe get six piece tobacco in his cigarette paper. I try to explain to dose fellow (you know since my letter was appear in de magazine I'm look at like almost one expert on de bayou now) dat dis time t'ings be different. I tell dem how I was read where in de book on de Muskrat it told de whole wide world dat de dragline hoperator, if dey know and if dey care, can do more to improve de marsh for wildlife den anybody else can do in fifty year. Once you cut de ditches so de tide can flow from one bayou to de other wit circulation—goodbye marsh!

"An' yes, but dis ship channel is gone cut right true what's some of de bes' marsh what's lef' in de state" de other mens say to me.

But I say "Didn't dose lawmaker at Baton Rouge pass a big 'propriation bill for money to push river water true de marsh in dis same place? When dey spend all dat money, for sure dey's gone watch and see dat dose dredgeboat pile up de dirt like a levee on both side de bank. But special when dey cut true a bayou or a ditch-den dey gotta be mighty careful de tide don't start play race track true de marsh. Between de law maker an' de Wildlife Commission I don' worry me—by now dey know what is bad for de marsh and dis time dey gone get some good hengineer dat use hinstruments, not one of dose fellow dat drives de train and blows de whistle before you can close one eye in bed."

I explain furder (but I get closer an' talk louder at de same time too) "Mos' of de land where de channel go is own by de furs company an' people dat lease de land for ducks hunting. Dat channel could be just like one big pipe line what pump salt water true de marsh if dey let it. But dey won't, cause dey know jus' as soon as de tide runs round an' round true de marsh, and we have little bad weather, all over de marsh washouts come from nowhere like mosquitos in de fog. Den come de big storm and is more lake an' less marsh—de marsh is in de lake and de lake is over de marsh to stay."

Well, much heads are shake—some yes, some no. But you know dose guys are gone talk to dere legislatures; and wit all dose vote and big family I t'ink dey gone listen to dem trapper. Now if dose sports from de city what hunts duck can make de request with de bosses of de channel about be careful how de channel is dig, dat's bound to help some too.

Of course, de ducks hunter has more to bother him, too. All one side de Intra Coast Canal is being drain an' plenty dirt haul to make room for industrious plants. Dat' sure gone cut down on de room to hunt ducks close by de city. Dey gone need all what's lef' of de marsh.

"Oui," I conclude, "I'm for what is call progress." But like I say when I pick up my can of coal oil an' jump in my pirogue to go home for feed my hog, "Dat's gone be one big shortcut, yes, but it might just be de shortcut to de end of all de bes' marsh on de whole eas' side de river. Au revoir."

# NO LETUP IN GAME LAW INFORCEMENT

IT COST HUBERT McCRAW of Columbia, Mississippi, and Eugene O. Aucoin of Franklin, $250 before District Judge R. J. Putnam, of Vermillion parish, to find out that game agents of the Wild Life and Fisheries commission's enforcement division are still on the job night and day despite the fact that the season is closed.

The arrest of the two came as the result of an investigation by Game agents E. J. Cormier and Coleman Fontenot on suspicion that workers on oil company quarterboats on the Louisiana fur company's lands at Pecan Island were wantonly slaying deer and hauling away only the hindquarters for preservation in deep freezers.

Following reports that the carcasses of 15 or more deer, minus their hindquarters, had been seen strewn along the levee at the island trapping ground, the two agents, along with U. S. Federal Game agent Joe Perreaux, cruised the suspected territory by plane and substantiated the report. Later Cormier and Fontenot returned to the location in a commission patrol boat and finding no one at the scene, which was adjacent to an unoccupied hunter's camp, the two went into hiding to wait for the culprits to return for more hunting.

Shortly before midnight the agents saw search lights shining over the swamp and closed in just in time to catch McCraw, Jr., and Aucoin slay a deer and place the animal in their boat.

The hunters were charged with hunting deer in closed season and slaying deer with a 22 rifle and hunting at night with a searchlight. The two were additionally charged with hunting bullfrogs at night with a searchlight and 22 rifle after the agents found five bullfrogs in their boat which the men confessed they had taken by "shining" them.

Another quick arrest came this month when Game agents Sam J. Nunez and Billy Ransom lay in wait for three brothers hunting in the swamps near Kenilworth. After hearing a cannonade in the swamp and devining its purpose the agents went to a well known pirogue landing on the edge of the swamp and calmly awaited the arrival of the illegal hunters. Their vigil was rewarded when Alex, Edward and Joachim Nunez, all of St. Bernard Parish, arrived with their pirogues loaded with 68 blue-wing teal ducks.

The hunters were charged with taking ducks illegally out of season.

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# Herpetologists And Ichthyologists Meet In New Orleans

### By Steve Harmon

Sing a song of serpents,
A pocket full or more.
Some meeting ! ! ! those "Ichs and Herps"!

As far as I could learn, they were professional biologists who specialized in fishes, amphibians, or reptiles, or all three. They could have been men from Mars with their mumbo-jumbo . . . they seemed to understand each other, though.

Here are a few titles taken from the program of the meeting held at the Jung Hotel, April 18-21, 1957. We had to ask Percy Viosca, our own Ichthyologist, who seems to understand this lingo, to translate them for us. Percy says "The Systematics of Shore Brotulids with Free Caudal Appendages" is about a group of ugly brown fishes we don't see in the sea because they live in the sand. Their tails are free, so it helps them dig back into the sand when the waves wash the sand away.

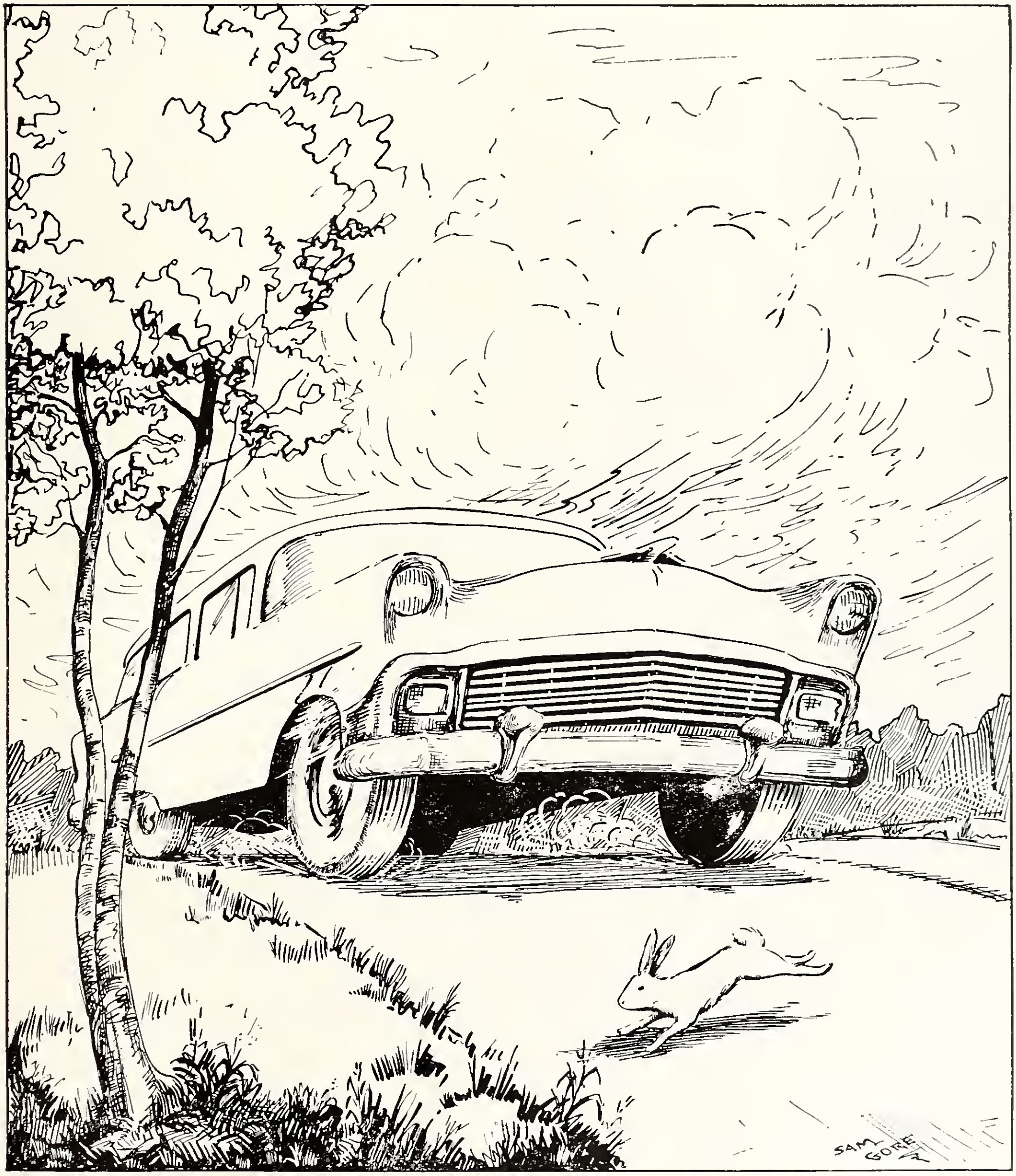
The one about "Sexual Dimorphism in a Population of Crotalus *atrox*", means that male Texas rattlers look different from the females, and herpetologists can tell them apart without looking for that gleam in his eye.

After dozing through 59 of these concoctions, (two more than the well known 57 varieties), I woke up and found the room in total darkness. Someone put out the lights to show a beautiful movie of catching porpoises for the Seaquarium at Miami. This was followed by another movie showing the catching of rare sea creatures including a live whale for Marineland of the Pacific, and how the biologists entered the tank and escorted the whale about and petted him gently until he got used to such a small world and his new friends. When the whale gulped, they threw squids into his mouth until he learned to take them from the loving hands of the biologists.

The tape recordings, if not out of this world, were at least out of this hemisphere. The frogs of Australia spoke for themselves in a weird and varied lingo. Today you don't have to get lost in the jungles of the antipodes to hear strange and beautiful sounds. You can bring these recordings right into your home, if you can relish such a serving. There was also a recording of *Hyla regilla.* We should all be familiar with this Pacific Coast treefrog voice. We hear in all swamp movies "made in Hollywood". However, Percy says it hurts his geographic sense to hear this California frog when an African elephant is drinking from a pool, or to the accompaniment of a Louisiana bullfrog or bull alligator. Such sounds don't harmonize.

The banquet speeches were somewhat more intelligible. Here was a society that needed to hire no professional entertainers. They entertained each other telling tall tales, all stranger than fiction. I remember the one about the crocodile, that escaped his captors after being tied hands and feet with the biologists' shirts. The reptile simply rolled down the bank, shirts and all, faster than they could run, and then swam away like a greased eel. I didn't learn if the shirts were ever recovered, but when I inquired about the delicious hors-douvres, rattlesnake meat was the answer. I was afraid to ask any more questions.

# GIVE A BRAKE FOR WILDLIFE



*Nest and Eggs of the Grackle.*

Photo by Britt